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Illinois

Transforming Communities
Through Service

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS-URBANA



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What is Illinois AmeriCorps?

AmeriCorps is a national service initiative dedicated to strengthening communities and meeting local educational, human, environmental and public safety needs particularly those that affect children and young people. The program is funded through a federal agency, the Corporation for National Service, and administered by state commissions. The Illinois Commission on Community Service, housed in the Department of Commerce and Community Affairs' Community Development Bureau, administers Illinois AmeriCorps. The Commission is comprised of a 25-member volunteer board with 4 staff.

How are organizations selected to be AmeriCorps programs; what types of grants; how much money is available; and what is the financial commitment required of programs?

Nonprofit organizations, units of local government, state agencies, institutions of higher education or partnerships among any of these are eligible to become AmeriCorps programs. Organizations are required to complete an application (Request for Proposal) and submit it to the Commission early in each calendar year. Proposals are recommended by the bipartisan Commission and then sent for approval to the Corporation for National Service.

Organizations may apply for three different types of grant funding: 1) Planning grant — a grant that allows for the development of a program to the point of implementation; 2) Operating grant — a grant that

requires a program design of 10 to 20 members and includes funding for member support costs, staff salaries, and administration. The average size of an operating grant is \$250,000. Operating grants are for one year; 3) Education Awards Only grant — a grant of post-service education awards. With this option, an organization must operate an AmeriCorps-type program and bear the total cost for the program. After successful completion of a full or part-time term, members receive an education award.

For the 1996-97 grant year, Illinois granted \$3.3 million in funds to 15 AmeriCorps programs. Programs are required to raise a significant cash and in-kind match — 15% cash match of the members' living allowance and health care and 33% cash/in-kind match of operational costs.

Who is eligible to serve in AmeriCorps?

Individuals who are age 17 or older may apply to a qualified AmeriCorps program. More than 350 Illinoisans are currently serving in 15 operating programs. Participation is encouraged from people of all ages, income levels and races, including individuals with disabilities. AmeriCorps members may serve before, during or after post-secondary education. Participants who are not high school graduates must receive their GED prior to finishing their term of service.

What benefits do AmeriCorps members receive?

For a year of service, full-time members receive a living allowance of \$8,340 and, upon successful com-

pletion of 1,700 hours of service, an educational award of \$4,725. Full-time members receive health insurance and child care coverage, if eligible. Part-time members receive a living allowance of \$4,415 and, upon successful completion of 900 hours of service, an education award of \$2,363. The education award is usable for seven years after completion of service and can be applied toward future education or existing student loans.

Members meet local educational, human, environmental and public safety needs by performing direct-service activities for their program. In addition, members gain leadership skills and develop an ethic of service.

How do I become an AmeriCorps Member?

Contact the Illinois Commission on Community Service for an application. Programs start their service years in either September/October or January.

How does my organization apply for an AmeriCorps grant?

Contact the Illinois Commission on Community Service to get on the mailing list for up-to-date information on the Request for Proposal process.

1-800/592-9896

Illinois AmeriCorps Programs

1996-1997

American Red Cross: Members teach health and safety courses in underserved areas of Illinois.

AmeriCorps in Southern Illinois: Members provide tutoring and mentoring services to at-risk junior high students throughout southern Illinois.

AmeriCorps/East St. Louis: Members provide tutoring and mentoring services to children.

Belleville AmeriCorps: Members serve in two low income neighborhoods to improve the quality of life.

Chicago Commons: Members serve on Chicago's South Side and provide counseling, tutoring, and recreational activities for youth.

Comprehensive Homeless Assistance Response Team: Members provide services to the homeless and at-risk populations of Champaign County, Illinois.

Decatur AmeriCorps: Members serve in 16 agencies on public health, education, and environment.

Illinois ChildCorps: Members serve to develop and improve the quality and quantity of day care statewide.

Illinois RiverWatch Network: Members monitor Illinois rivers and streams and train volunteers how to monitor rivers.

Latino Youth: Members serve to improve race relations in Chicago's Lawndale community.

Public Allies: Members serve at 37 Chicago agencies that provide services to economically disadvantaged communities.

Uptown Habitat for Humanity: Members renovate apartment buildings in the West Humboldt Park community.

Juvenile Parolee Mentoring Program: Members mentor juvenile parolees to decrease the rate of re-offending and re-incarceration.

Travelers and Immigrants Aid: Members tutor and mentor children in a public housing building.

Cornerstone Services: Members provide service to the developmentally disabled to foster independent living.

Please contact ICCS in the Fall of 1997 for an updated list of programs.

AmeriCorps programs provide meaningful opportunities for Americans of all ages and backgrounds to serve their country in organized community efforts that foster citizenship, strengthen communities and provide opportunities for those who make a commitment to service.

AmeriCorps is about Getting Things Done. AmeriCorps members are involved in programs centering on educational, human, environmental, and public safety needs. For example, members tutor students, restore dilapidated housing, and reduce environmental hazards.

For further information on Illinois AmeriCorps, call 312/814-5225; toll-free 800/592-9896; TDD 800/419-0667; or write the Illinois Commission on Community Service, 100 W. Randolph, Suite 3-400, Chicago, IL 60601

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Other National Service Programs

AmeriCorps/VISTA; AmeriCorps/NCCC;
National Senior Service Corps; and
Learn and Serve America

For further information on these programs, contact the Corporation for National Service at 202/606-5000; toll-free 800/942-2677; TDD 800/833-3722.